



PARENT HANDBOOK

455 N Gerald Lett Avenue

Angola, Indiana 46703

(260) 243-5330

director@thevineinangola.com

Website: thevineinangola.com

Revised August 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Welcome	4
Mission, Vision, and Goals	4

Admissions

Admission Policy	5
Application Fees and Deposit	5
Waitlist	6
Annual Re-Enrollment	6
Withdrawal and Refunds	6
Discipline Tier and Expulsion Policy	7
Grievance Procedure	8

Tuition

Rates	8
Invoicing and Payments	8
Late Fees	8
Discounts	9
Assistance	9
Classroom Transitions	9

Attendance

Reporting	9
Illness Policy and Exclusion	10
Medications	10
After Hours Pick-Up	11
Vacation	11

Operations and Communication

Hours 12

Materials 12

Playground 13

Rest Period 13

Screenings & Assessments 13

Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Guide 14

Injury Reporting 15

Food and Nutrition 15

Holidays and Closures

Calendar 16

Faculty Development and Campus Maintenance 16

Emergency Closings 17

Delays and Cancellations 17

Campus Information

Arrival & Departure 17

Health & Safety 18

Daily Schedule 18

Curriculum

Philosophy and Theory 19

Toileting 21

Faith 21

Field Trips and Transportation 21

Other

Parent Engagement 21

Child Abuse and Neglect 22

Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to The Vine Early Learning, Inc. We are honored that you are becoming a part of life-long learning with The Vine. Our goal is to educate your child through their natural senses in a Montessori-inspired, nature-based program that will promote independence, self-discipline, and order in every child. We look forward to working with you and your family.

- The Vine Faculty and Staff

Our Mission

Growing God's kingdom through education and discovery.

Our Vision

Transforming childhood to discover God given abilities through faith, arts, and nature.

Our Goals

- To care for children as unique individuals
- To create a safe and compassionate environment
- To teach children Christian values
- To instill respectfulness, kindness, and confidence
- To partner with parents to raise the next generation
- To educate children through joyful and curious exploration

The Vine complies with all state ministry guidelines, the Voluntary Certification Program, CCDF voucher program, and Paths to Quality.

Admissions

Admission Policy

The Vine does not discriminate for enrollment based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, or disability. If it is determined that The Vine cannot make reasonable accommodations for your child's enrollment, we will aid in connecting you to the nearest Resource and Referral programs in hopes that you find a program to fit your child's needs.

All paperwork included in the online enrollment packet is required to be completed prior to the first date of attendance.

The enrollment packet includes the Handbook Acknowledgement, Parent's/Guardian's Notice (State Form 49444), Sun Protection and Insect Repellent Consent Form, Nature Exploration Consent Form, Health Care Record (State Form 49969), Transportation of Food Responsibility, Acknowledgement of Discipline and Expulsion, First Aid Consent Form, and Emergency Medical Authorization.

Additional packet information may include the Parent/Student Calendar, Rate Sheet, CCDF/On My Way Pre-Application (State Form 56895), Vaccine Medical Exemption (State Form 54648), Record of Medication Order (State Form 49968), Breast Milk Procedure (State Form 49954), Feeding Schedule, Infant Safe Sleep Acknowledgement, and Medical Waiver for Alternate Sleeping Position (State Form 56619), when applicable.

Application Fees and Deposit

A non-refundable processing fee of \$50.00 is due at the time of application submission for each child.

A refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition is required upon enrollment. Said deposit will be forfeited if proper notice (2 weeks) of withdrawal is not given. The deposit may be used toward the final week's tuition.

Waitlist

A waitlist is maintained for each age interval. Enrollment spots are filled based on application date with priority given to siblings and referrals of current enrollments.

Annual Re-Enrollment

Re-enrollment paperwork will be passed out during July and required in order for your child to begin the school year in August.

Parents/Guardians who may not need care during the summer will need to speak with the Director about options for holding their placement. There will be a holding fee each week until the child returns. Should plans change over the summer and the child does not return, the summer holding fees are non-refundable. All paperwork included in the re-enrollment packet is required to be completed prior to the first date of fall attendance.

The re-enrollment packet includes a form with updated emergency contacts, a current Parent Handbook acknowledgement, current grounds policy, and updated physical and/or vaccine record as needed.

Withdrawal and Refunds

A two-week's notice is required to end enrollment. The enrolling party is responsible for tuition from the date of notice through the following 10 business days, regardless of attendance within that period. Families will receive a deposit credit to the open account upon withdrawal.

In the event that Legal Action is necessary to enforce payment, or The Vine Early Learning prevails in any legal or equitable proceeding against Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to this Agreement brought under or with relation to this Agreement, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be responsible for any resulting attorney's fees, collection costs and court costs related thereto.

Discipline Tier and Expulsion Policy

Safety is the main objective for every individual on campus. Physical aggression of any kind will not be tolerated. The Vine utilizes a nine-factor disciplinary tracking system. All disciplinary notices require acknowledgement signature upon receipt. Failure to acknowledge receipt of notice does not void the tier.

The following reasons are subject to disciplinary action and/or termination after any combination of three occurrences within the same month:

- Inability to Meet Needs
- Disruptive Behaviors
- Violent Behaviors
- Abuse to Staff or Faculty

Upon the first disciplinary notice, a written warning will be provided. Upon the second disciplinary notice, children will be suspended for one complete day; a case conference may be requested within 5 days of notice subject to Administration availability. Upon the third disciplinary notice, children will be suspended for one complete week. Shall any disciplinary action occur after the third notice, same day expulsion of the child will be communicated. Parents may gather all belongings of the child's upon pick-up and will be asked not to return.

Should none of the factors above be an issue for your child, but they remain unsuccessful in The Vine's learning environment, enrollment will be terminated with a two weeks' notice provided in writing.

In extreme instances, Administration reserves the right to terminate any enrollment in the best interest of all operations at any time with same day notice, including:

- Late Tuition Payments
- Uncooperativeness from Parents/Guardians
- Lack of Appropriate Materials Provided for the Child
- Misalignment of Values
- Denigrating the Business
- Late Pick-Ups

Account balances are due in full upon expulsion to avoid legal action.

Grievance Procedure

Any complaints about the facility, staff, curriculum, etc. should be reported to the Director in writing. It is a commitment of The Vine to resolve all complaints and concerns in a timely manner.

The Vine operates under a Board of Directors. Any concerns or complaints about the Director should be reported to members of the Board in writing. Any member of the Board may be requested to be present for a meeting, but is subject to availability.

Tuition

All outstanding account balances are subject to legal action and/or additional fees if not settled in an appropriate, timely manner. Outstanding account balances at the time of withdrawal will accrue a 5% monthly balance fee until paid in full.

Rates

Tuition is subject to change. At least two weeks' notice will be given to parents if fees are changing. Notwithstanding, tuition will be increased by 2% annually on January 1st of each year without notice.

Invoicing and Payments

Tuition is invoiced weekly on Thursdays. Payment is due by end of each Monday.

Payment is due regardless of absence, illness, or unforeseen closure(s) in order to hold your child's enrollment.

Late Fees

Payment will be made in advance, on, or before the first day of attendance each week. Invoices are sent out via email through the Playground system on Thursday with payment due by Monday. Payment is due regardless of absence. This includes illness, doctor appointments, parent's day off work, etc. If the tuition is not paid by Monday each new week, a \$10 late fee may be added. If, after two weeks, tuition continues to be unpaid, the child(ren) will not be allowed to return to The Vine until the tuition is paid to date. There will be no reduction in tuition for absent days, weather closures or holidays.

Discounts

A sibling discount of 10% off the weekly rate is available for additional child(ren).

Assistance

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) who receive third party vouchers are responsible for all paperwork and documentation. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are also responsible for signing their child(ren) in and out each day to ensure accurate attendance records. Furthermore, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be ultimately responsible for payment of all services received, regardless of payments/vouchers are being paid on their behalf by third parties, including but not limited to governmental agencies.

Classroom Transitions

We will attempt to provide a minimum of one week's notice prior to classroom transitions. Along with room transitions, tuition and fees may vary. Each lead teacher will share a welcome letter and important things to know about their classroom.

Attendance

Reporting

Please communicate with staff through Playground if your child will not be in attendance by 9:00AM or if they will be leaving early for any reason. It will benefit your child to attend the morning class routines as consistently as possible.

Children with more than ten unexcused absences or tardies in a school year are subject to reporting with the Indiana Department of Child Services. Written excuses of absence must be submitted within 3 days of the child's return.

Illness Policy and Exclusion

Children with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be sent home and may not return until they have been fever free for a minimum of 24-hours unmedicated. Children who are ill will be excluded from all activities and classroom functions and will remain with Administration in seclusion until pick-up occurs. Pick-up of ill children is required within one hour of notification.

Any child that has loose stool more than twice in eight hours with any other accompanying symptoms will be sent home. The child may not return until symptoms have concluded for a minimum of 24-hours.

Any child who is vomiting will be sent home and will be asked not to return for 24-hours after the last occurrence.

Any child with a communicable disease may not attend until proof to return has been submitted in writing by a physician. Examples of these illnesses may include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Measles
- Conjunctivitis
- Influenza
- Chickenpox
- Tuberculosis

A communicable disease chart from the Family and Social Services Division of Indiana is available upon request.

Children who have head lice will be sent home for immediate treatment.

Medications

In order for The Vine to administer any type of medication, written authorization from a pediatrician or physician must be on file. Prescriptions must remain in the original packaging. Non-prescription medications are also allowed with physician/pediatrician's consent. Your physician may complete State Form 49968 found on our website or supply their own form, as long as it is signed and dated with instructions.

Medications that expire will be sent home with an adult and will not be administered.

Annual renewal of medication consents is required.

After Hours Pick-Up

Any child remaining past the time of closure will be charged \$25 every 15 minutes, due upon invoice. Should your child not be picked up 60 minutes past the time of closure, a report will be made to the Department of Child Services. Efforts to communicate with parents and emergency contacts will be attempted by faculty prior to report.

Vacation

Five days of tuition free time will be issued to each child at the beginning of each school year. Time will be available for use until the end of July. Days may be used in half or whole increments. Any additional days your child is absent, regular rates will apply. After being enrolled for one year, each full-time enrollment is eligible for an additional 5 days.

Families enrolling between March and May will be given two days of tuition free time until the school year begins in August.

A minimum of two weeks' notice in writing is preferred to use free time. Requests should be emailed directly to the Director at director@thevineinangola.com.

Days do not accumulate annually. Any unused time will be forfeited at the end of summer programming.

*Families who utilize CCDF vouchers do not qualify for our vacation days; they are required to follow the rules set forth by FSSA.

Operations and Communication

Hours

Current hours of operation are 7:00AM to 5:30PM Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Due to the nature of the program that The Vine offers, hours of operation are subject to change on a temporary basis. In the event that hours need to differ, a minimum two weeks' notice will be provided in writing.

For additional information, please refer to the Holidays and Closures section.

Materials

A list of necessary materials/supplies will be given upon enrollment. Periodically throughout the year, additional supplies may be requested. Donations are always welcomed!

Please ensure that your child is dressed in appropriate and safe attire for all areas of campus. Clothing should be comfortable and be able to get dirty. Costumes and pajamas are not permitted, unless otherwise communicated.

Toys are asked to remain outside of the building in order to alleviate your child's desire to use them during the day.

The Vine provides diapers and wipes to children in the infant and toddler classrooms. Parents must provide diapering/toileting supplies for children in the Primary room. Faculty will communicate when your child's supply needs replenished.

Personal items must be contained in your child's cubby or bookbag. The Vine is not responsible for any lost or stolen property.



All reporting and communication regarding your child will be conducted using the Playground application. Communications through this app are sent in real time. Playground communications may include but are not limited to:

- Daily Interactions
- Photos and Videos
- Messaging
- Incident Reports
- Diapering/Feedings/Napping
- Weekly Invoicing

Children receive observation records through anecdotal notes, work lessons, portfolios, and developmental milestone checklists. Individual child information is available upon request.

Rest Period

According to age and/or needs, children are given the opportunity to nap either once or twice daily. Children who are not sleeping after 30 minutes can be offered an alternate activity.

Children attending Kindergarten in the Fall will begin to transition away from rest time, unless otherwise communicated, beginning the first day of Summer Program prior to entering Kindergarten.

A small blanket, travel pillow, and comfort item such as a stuffed animal are permitted during rest period for children 12 months and older. All items will remain in the child's cubby before and after resting. Children are transitioned from crib to cot sleeping between 12 and 18 months of age.

Screenings & Assessments

Once every Fall, The Vine will complete an [Ages and Stages Screening](#) at the present age of the child. A case conference may be requested to discuss the screen within 30 days of completion. Further screening may occur upon need.

Annually, a vision screening from Operation KidSight will be conducted at no cost. *Operation KidSight* is a statewide vision-screening program that identifies treatable or preventable causes of blindness in preschool children (ages 18 months – 6 years).

Annually, a hearing screening from GiveHear will be conducted at no cost. *GiveHear* offers the community assistance in identifying and preventing hearing issues. GiveHear is a non-profit audiology organization that offers on-site diagnostic screenings in newborns and preschool aged children.

Screenings are subject to local availability.

Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Guide

- 1) **Fire:** Monthly fire drills are conducted in accordance with the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) regulation.
 - a. Evacuation Plans are posted in each classroom on the exit door.
 - b. Children are taken 150 feet away from the nearest point of the building at minimum. All children are accounted for individually by visual acknowledgement in the event of a fire.
 - c. If relocation is needed, all children will be escorted to the nearest available local business parking lot. Parents will be alerted immediately upon relocation and asked to gather their child(ren) within 30 minutes.

- 2) **Tornado Watch/Warnings:** Twice annually, children will participate in a tornado drill on-site.
 - a. Children will gather away from all windows and doors in designated Tornado Safe rooms of the building.

- 3) **Power Outage**
 - a. In order to maintain safety, children will not be permitted on campus during any outage of power. Shall the power outage occur during operating hours, parents will be notified after 30 minutes if the power has not returned. Pick up is expected within one hour of the notification of closure.

- 4) **Lock Down:** Rarely, precautionary measures in response to an alert from local law enforcement of a threat near or at the facility are necessary.
 - a. In the event that any situation may arise in the community that would place your child at harm, the building will be on total lock down until otherwise communicated through local authorities.
 - b. No individuals will be permitted to enter or leave during lock down.

5) Inclement Weather

- a. Shall an emergency of weather be issued during hours of operation, parents will be alerted immediately. Children are required to be picked up within one hour of the notification.

Injury Reporting

First Aid will be provided for minor injuries. Documentation of the injury will occur on Playground immediately. In the event of a major medical emergency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will be called.

Administration reserves the right to treat each child's injury as necessary for the safety and well-being of the child.

Any child that ingests an object while on campus will be sent home within 30 minutes for immediate medical attention. The Vine is not responsible for any medical treatment in the event that your child ingests an object while in attendance.

Food & Nutrition

Snack menus are posted weekly by Friday for the following week. Multiple faculty on campus are trained and certified in ServSafe food handling.

If your child has a food allergy or other dietary restrictions, substitutions will be made where possible. Children with dietary restrictions must have a physician's note on file. Special considerations will be made for religious restrictions; documentation must be provided. Parents/Guardians are required to provide specialized substitutions for their child upon need.

Children are permitted to bring in a 'special occasion' snack to share on their birthday. Home-baked goods are not permitted. Celebration snacks will be provided following the in addition to regularly planned snacks.

The Vine does not provide breakfast or dinner. Your child may bring a breakfast to be consumed prior to 7:45AM.

Each child must bring their own lunch. Lunches must follow the Food Transportation Responsibility guidelines as outlined in your enrollment packet. Thermal lunch containers will be stored in a commercial refrigerator until served. Heating of items is not available at this time. Any foods not consumed will be disposed of.

Food delivery of any kind is not permitted on campus for any child.

Holidays and Closures

Calendar

A similar schedule to that of the Metropolitan School District (MSD) of Steuben County is followed. The Vine does not operate on:

- New Year's Eve (Observed)
- New Year's Day (Observed)
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (Observed)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving & the day after
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day (Observed)

The Vine typically does not operate the week of MSD's Spring Break or the week between Christmas and the New Year. The annual calendar will be distributed in July each year.

There is no reduction in tuition for the week of Spring Break. Tuition the week between Christmas and the New Year is excluded.

Faculty and Staff Development

The Vine holds annual Professional Development days for faculty, as well as monthly "early dismissals". The use of this time is to maintain quality of care rating levels and to meet FSSA regulations to better your child's education. During these specified days or times, children are not permitted on campus. These days are built into the annual calendar a year in advance. There is no reduction in tuition for these days unless free time is utilized with proper notice.

Campus Maintenance

Occasionally, campus will need to close to perform annual maintenance and building renovations. During these specified days, children are not permitted on campus. There is no reduction in tuition for these days unless free time is utilized with proper notice.

Emergency Closings

In the event of an emergency closure, parents will be notified as soon as information becomes available. Normal tuition rates will apply unless otherwise communicated.

Delays and Cancellations

Shall there be an MSD delay or cancellation of school, The Vine will still operate as normal unless otherwise communicated. It is your discretion if your child will be in attendance. Normal tuition rates will apply.

Should The Vine need to close for inclement weather, no alternative care will be provided. Normal tuition rates will apply unless free days are utilized.

Campus Information

Arrival & Departure

All children are expected to be escorted to/from class by an adult. The student entrance will be available during regular business hours. A personal code will be distributed for entry upon enrollment.

Children will only be released to an adult who is listed with authorization. Photo identification will be required for verification. Any same day emergency authorizations must be reported to Administration in writing.

Any parent or guardian listed on your child's birth certificate will be granted permission to pick up unless legal documentation stating otherwise has been provided. A copy of said documentation must remain on file during the duration of enrollment.

Children will not be released to any individual who appears to be impaired or disoriented. The Vine reserves the right to arrange for an alternate pick-up to ensure the child's safety and well-being. If all attempts are unsuccessful, local law enforcement and/or the Department of Child Services will be contacted.

Health & Safety

The Board of Health requires that all children complete a physical examination or well-child check within 30 days of enrollment with annual participation thereafter.

Documentation is required to remain on file along with immunization records or waivers.

Immunizations are required to be updated regularly, when applicable. Please see Administration for vaccination exemptions.

The Vine is a tobacco free, smoke-free, and alcohol-free campus.

Daily Schedule

Although we strive to have all classrooms open for all hours of operation, during the first and last hour of each day, children close in age may combine or move to a neighboring classroom while still maintaining FSSA ratios.

Children in the Primary class will be given the opportunity to rest from 12:00PM to 2:00PM daily. Alternative activities can be offered to children who are not asleep after 30 minutes.

Curriculum

Montessori Philosophy and Theory

The Vine utilizes a nature-based learning environment, inspired by Dr. Maria Montessori's curriculum, centered around the whole child. Montessori education emphasizes:

- purposeful 'work'
- self-motivation
- order in the environment and materials
- movement
- self-discipline and respect

The Montessori philosophy and theory is rooted in order, concentration, coordination, and independence in the five basic areas of study: Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Culture. The Montessori curriculum allows children to excel their education individually in areas of study that appeal to them. By giving the child 'choice', learning becomes joyful and holistic.

Children are provided with an uninterrupted period of time for education known as the "work cycle". The Vine recommends that parents/guardians avoid drop off or pick up for appointments during the morning work cycle, 8:00AM to 11:00AM. Children are able to explore the prepared environment and engage in materials of their own choosing. The time is meant to give children the opportunities to enjoy the work they love, while cultivating basic life skills. The work cycle helps children to:

1. Become more independent
2. Strengthen their ability to focus
3. Find joy with the materials
4. Feel deep satisfaction with their work
5. Develop skills they will use all through life

Materials may be periodically rotated to meet the needs of the children in each classroom.

Large and fine motor activities are available for children of all ages while on campus.

Children spend a minimum of 30 minutes outside daily at all age intervals, weather permitting. FSSA guidelines require children to remain indoors when temperatures exceed 85 degrees Fahrenheit and drop below 25 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures are monitored daily by Administration in 'real feel'.

The Vine is a technology free campus. Occasionally, resource videos may be shown.

Infant: Ranges from 6 weeks – 18 months

Our curriculum provides infants with a safe and nurturing world full of opportunities for active exploration and enjoyment in learning through their senses in our indoor and outdoor environments. An infant's day is based on the individual schedule of the child.

Parents/Guardians are expected to supply all foods, pre-mixed bottles, and/or breast milk for the child daily. All open jars and bottles must be used within 24 hours after opening. Containers that have been opened must be labeled with the child's name and the date and time the item was opened/prepared.

Parents/Guardians are expected to supply all powders and/or creams for their child ALONG WITH A NOTE FROM A PHYSICIAN. Parents/Guardians will be notified by the classroom teacher when supply of any item needs replenished. Each child must have at least TWO complete changes of clothing to remain on campus.

Toddler: Ranges from 12 months – 3 years

Children's education is rapidly increasing during this plane of development. Children enjoy a setting that nurtures the spirit while supporting growth and independence through exploration. Though a classroom schedule is introduced, teachers recognize and accommodate for the individual needs of each child daily.

Primary: Ranges from 30 months to – 6 years

The Montessori curriculum revolves around concrete, real experiences. As children begin to have more control over their minds and bodies, we help them learn to distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what they already know. Children are encouraged to be free within limits as they strengthen their levels of independence.

Toileting

Children are given several opportunities daily to toilet. Children may choose to toilet with assistance anytime once in a Toddler classroom. Toileting rewards (such as stickers or candy) are not a part of The Vine's curriculum.

Faith

Children learn through culture about God's creations. Bible stories/songs may be included or referenced at any time while your child is on campus to assist with the instruction of the environment. Bible references instill respect, love, and excitement for the world; plant the seeds for a courteous heart; build connections between everyday life; provide a sense of wonder and exploration; and emphasize a compassion for learning through developmentally appropriate experiences.

Field Trips and Transportation

Occasionally, as a part of curriculum extensions, The Vine may participate in off-site field trips that require transportation of your child. All transportation provided by The Vine is at will and may be withheld for the safety of your child or others. If your child is not able to participate in an extension, alternate instruction will be provided on campus in an available classroom.

Written permission slips will be sent home for approval at a minimum of 10 days prior to the field trip date.

Other

Parent Engagement

Children learn and have success in early education when strong relationships are built with families. The Vine recognizes the importance of building strong partnerships and will focus on strengthening, assisting, empowering, and supporting your family.

The goal of each child's teacher is to become a resource, so together The Vine can offer the best environment for your child. We make every effort to have an open-door policy.

Communication will occur face to face whenever possible.

Conferences for Parents/Guardians and teachers, for the Primary class will be scheduled semi-annually during which the teachers share observations and assessments, and work with parents to set goals. Infant/Toddler Staff may communicate growth through letters or screening results rather than in-person meetings.

In addition, we may offer programs including open houses, parent in-services, and classroom activities as opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their child. Classroom visitations should be arranged with Administration at any time. Should you need access to your child's files, please see Administration.

Parents/Guardians are always welcome at The Vine! Inquire with Administration on ways you can be involved and help support your child and our organization. Anyone who volunteers eight or more hours a month must, at their own expense, complete the requirements set forth by the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning.

Child Abuse & Neglect

If a faculty member suspects child abuse/neglect of a child, they will document and report it to the Child Abuse Hotline immediately.

If you suspect child abuse or neglect is happening to your child while at The Vine, it is important that you immediately report it to Administration for investigation. If faculty is accused of child abuse/neglect, they will be reported to the Department of Child Services and The Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning. The faculty will be suspended without pay while under investigation. If the allegation is unsubstantiated, the faculty may be allowed to return following the close of the investigation.

All Indiana adults are considered mandated reporters of any child abuse or neglect. Annual training on this topic is required for all faculty. Administration is available to assist you with the reporting process if need be. You can also report directly to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-800-5556.